

THE MONTANA NEWS.

VOL. II.

LEWISTOWN, MONTANA, WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 1904.

NO. 34.

The Social Opportunity

BY GEO. D. HERRON.

There is no one so well prepared as the Socialist to interpret current events. The daily history of the nation and the world ought to be the Socialist's university. Every event, from the Philippine war to the Chicago theater fire, from the revision of our public school system to the latest historical novel, ought to be seized upon as a platform upon which the Socialist should stand and speak his interpretative message. He should show what each event or development means in the light of the economic law of history, and in the light of the Socialist hope for a world of fellowship.

For instance, there has been much ignorant and fruitless discussion on so-called "imperialism" this last five or six years, in both England and America. The Socialist has been the only one who could interpret these present day wars of conquest, these mere picnics of loot and murder, as modes or phases of economic competition. They are but the necessity of the growth of capitalism. When the people of a nation become too poor to buy the things which they make with their own hands, the owners of the source of profit must seek new markets and cheaper labor. That is why England is in Africa and Asia; why the United States is in the Philippine Islands, and why we are reaching out grasping hands to the islands, and peoples of South America. We are expanding in order that our capital may have the contract labor, or the disguised slave system, that we now have in the Sandwich Islands, that we may unload upon exploited peoples our surplus products. And of course, every child employed in the cotton mills of Egypt or India tends to lower the wage and intensify the struggle of every girl in the New England cotton mills and of every child in the cotton mills of the south. And every slave that works in the contract system of "our colonies" makes the struggle of labor in the United States so much the harder, and the lowering of the wage to the Asiatic level a certain tendency. As Socialists we could have shown the whole genius and capitalist nature of the passion of the nations for expansion; could have made clear that imperialism, or benevolent assimilation, is but a mere commercial and speculative development. But it does not seem to me that we have availed ourselves as Socialists, of the opportunity presented to us by the imperialistic development. We could have made much more pedagogic use of it than we have. Our tendency has been to ignore it as a matter that concerned only the capitalist parties. So far as the immediate issue of it was concerned, that was true; but it is not true that we should have ignored the discussion; for it was our rightful platform one of our supreme opportunities for showing the economic nature of the question, and of showing how its political aspects were a mere deceit and a humbug.

We should also have availed ourselves of the opportunity for showing the universal solidarity of labor conditions; of showing how, in the capitalist organization of the world, the whole labor body of the world must inevitably be dragged down to labor's lowest condition; of showing how universal and world-redemptive must be its solution.

Again, there was a phase of the discussion of the coal strike, which we failed to interpret, and by which many of the Socialist speakers and journals were led into false positions and concessions. The Hearst newspapers and the clergy took up the

cry of "public rights" as being superior to the rights of either party in the struggle. This proposition was announced with great pomp and solemnity by politicians and doctors of divinity, who imagined themselves to be putting a bold moral front. Many Socialist speakers and journals fell into something very near the same proposition. The whole discussion was made to pivot upon the rights of the public, or society, as superior to the rights of the contending classes of society. It was held that the right of "the public" to coal was greater than the right of the capitalist to his profits, or the right of the miner to better hours and conditions of labor. But the whole proposition was a fundamental lie, based upon an obsolete and fallacious philosophy. As a matter of fact, "the public" had absolutely no rights at all in the matter, because "the public" had failed to do right. The so-called rights of "the public" do not, and cannot, extend beyond the measure to which "the public" does right to the humblest member of society. A society that consents that those who dig its fuel and climate from the earth shall labor under conditions of danger and exhaustion; a society that consents that those of its members upon whom it depends for light and heat shall be beaten into submission to long labor hours and low wages; a society that does not accept the responsibility for seeing that every one of its members shall have the full equivalent of the whole product of his labors—such a society, such a public, deserves to freeze and starve, and to suffer all the consequences of its own ignorance, cowardice and irresponsibility. Such a public has no rights which any righteous man is bound to respect. A society or a public has a right to demand from each of its members only that measure of justice and service which it gives. If a public evades responsibility for economic and social justice for each of its members, then the members of such a society are absolved from responsibility for its comfort. The right of the miners to win their struggle was infinitely superior to any so-called public rights, and it was only the fundamental immorality in which our society is grounded that tolerated any other proposition. Public rights cannot outrun social righteousness. Individual responsibility for society can go no further than society's responsibility for the whole well-being of the individual. The process of reasoning that pivots itself upon the so-called theory of public rights is utterly misleading and treasonable. If we have a public mind or conscience that will not awaken to its responsibility for making wealth and opportunity common to each of its members, then such a society ought to be frozen and starved into enlightenment and responsibility. It is time we had a thorough clearing up of this matter of so-called public rights as against the rights of the organized worker in the struggle for the betterment of his condition. If Mr. Mitchell had but had the discernment and moral nerve to have held out a little longer, if Mr. Mitchell had not allowed Mr. Morgan and his associates to enable Mr. Roosevelt and other quacks to make political capital for themselves out of the suffering of the miners, the so-called public might have been taught some such lesson as this before the strike was settled. Sooner or later, this "dear public" will have to learn its lesson—the lesson that it has no rights beyond the righteousness and truthfulness of life which it extends to its every member. And the Socialist is the man to teach it.—The International Socialist Review.

Sketches From Lynch's Itinerary

Editor News:—Per your request for notes of my itinerary, in the interest of your paper, desire to say that if there has been any change in the city of Helena industrially, in the last decade, it is imperceptible, other than the addition of a few government buildings. Helena is just Helena. The principal industries here are the National Biscuit Co., two breweries, and brick yard in connection; one county court house and one state house. Parenthetically it better be said that there are union men employed in each.

The town is teeming with Socialists. They read. They think. Out of one hundred subscribers that I have added to your list in the last nine days fifty per cent are of the middle class, some better, from a pecuniary point, and others millionaires, demonstrating that all classes here are contributing marked attention to the greatest living question of the age.

John W. Brown, the impressive Socialist orator, gave a lecture here on the 27th ult., in the Unitarian church, on the "Triumph of Socialism." A feature of the occasion was the abnormal size of the principals; the speaker and the chairman. Mr. Brown measures six feet four, and Chairman Husby, six feet six. A fair sized audience gave Mr. Brown sharp attention for two hours and fifteen minutes.

Different phases of "Socialism" obtain here. There is the Amalgamated "Socialist," the Heinze "Socialist," the sentimentalistic "Socialist," the opportunistic "Socialist," the union "Socialist" and the Socialist. The latter represents the Socialist party of Helena; are in the local club, and following party principles. The union "Socialist" is especially appealing. His antics would mystify an East India juggler. He wants it understood that he is a Socialist, but of "piece at a time" propensities, that in the meanwhile this, or the other redemocrat must

Socialists, as usual in their efforts to arouse their dormant brothers are pointing to Colorado, as regards the will of the people expressed by ballot. However it may expedite the end to be attained. Indeed, some of the Socialists are crude enough to anticipate, on the part of the unionists, the annual pantomimic extravaganza of fighting capital (with their mouths) 364 days of the year, and voting the republic ticket on the 365th, in the vain hope of securing "favorable legislation." Twenty or thirty years experience of failures along this line is not sufficient. They are following the grotesque habit of groveling in the sand meshes, instead of standing erect on the International Wage Party rock. In "our" county, David Hilger will handle the Initiative and Referendum, it is said. Why not? Forsooth, David is a "shrewd" man politically. That is the proper present system appellation. Being a member of the citizens alliance of Lewistown, and a friend of the unions simultaneously, he will cut a "swath" both ways. Akin to "Golden Rule" Jones of Toledo, Ohio. David is "for ALL the people all of the time!"

The progress made by organized labor, in this city, in the last ten years, is pronounced. Ten years ago there were but half dozen crafts organized, and possibly two or three assemblies of the K. of L. Now there are twenty five unions seated in the Trades Council. The proverbial class war is raging here with intense fury. The unions are making an open fight in the matter of centralizing their trade; the alliance as usual, a silent one. While ostensibly organized only to oppose "unjust" boycotts by the unions, they (the alliance) are synchronously applying the same medicine to the small merchant, who refuses to enter unto their fold, thus abrogating any contention on their part as to the non-existence of two distinct classes under the wage system.

The "Fair" lists fails to show any retail gin shops thereon, hence all union men here, and those entering



CORNER OF LIBERAL ART BUILDING.

be preserved in office, in the interest of Socialism. Were the Socialists of Helena to give ear to the various claims of the politicians, with Socialistic tendencies, as to why the Socialist party should leave this or that office blank on their fall ticket, it would present an open space from Governor to Poundmaster inclusive.

A movement is on foot here, by some of the union men. They have formed an Initiative and Referendum club. They expect wonderful things politically. The Socialists, while not opposing it, look upon it as a huge joke, having for many years been cognizant of the final ending of kindred movements by the wage slaves—the political scrap pile.

the city must go "dry." The unions have hit upon a novel plan of accommodating pleasure seekers. They are to build an athletic park. Each union will form a base-ball nine. As a respecter of values, the "Typo" should raise the price of admission when they "go to play." The "lightning jokers" have formed a union here. Two years ago they formed into a commercial union, and when it became known to the management at St. Paul they were notified to jar loose, as it was dangerous. They jarred. Most of them have since jarred back again.

The east Helena Smelting Co., presents a simile to that of corpor-

(Continued on last page.)

Debs, Hanford Nominated

Convention Notes

Chicago, May 5.—Eugene V. Debs was today nominated as the Socialistic candidate for president of the United States. Benjamin Hanford of New York city was nominated for vice president. Neither nominee had any opposition. After condemning the policies of the democratic and republican parties, the platform, as adopted, appeals to the American people for support on the ground that the Socialist party is the only political organization standing for the principles by which the liberty of the individual may become a fact; that it is the only political organization which is truly democratic and which has for its purpose the conversion of society to the principles of true democracy.

May 1.—The National Convention of the Socialist Party of the United States was called to order by the National Secretary, William Mailly, at Brand's Hall, Chicago, Ill., Sunday morning, May 1, 1904, shortly after ten o'clock.

Nearly every delegate elected to the convention was present when the meeting was called to order.

Secretary Mailly made a few announcements in regard to railroad tickets, hotel accommodations and meeting place for the Committee on Credentials. The committee will for the present, meet in the lodge room on the second floor of the Revere House.

The secretary then read the official call for the convention, issued by the National Quorum and endorsed by the National Committee.

"Before calling for the election of temporary officers for the convention," said Secretary Mailly, "which I believe will be the next thing in order, I will state that I am glad to be able to announce to the convention that the comrades of Wisconsin have presented to the Socialist Party for the use of the chairman during this convention and succeeding conventions, this gavel, in the name of the Socialist Party of Wisconsin."

The secretary exhibited a beautiful silver gavel, and the presentation was greeted with enthusiasm.

"The next thing in order is the election of temporary chairman and temporary secretary, after which the election of the Committee on Credentials and Committee on Rules of Order, if the convention sees fit, shall be elected. Nominations for temporary chairman are now in order."

A rising vote was taken, which resulted in the election of James F. Carey, of Massachusetts, as temporary chairman.

Delegate Richardson moved that the election of Delegate Carey be made unanimous. Motion unanimously carried.

Delegate Carey then took the chair and was greeted with great enthusiasm.

The event of the morning session that called forth the greatest burst of enthusiasm outside of the reception accorded "Jim" Carey when elected to the temporary chairman—was the rendition of the Marseillaise ship by the German Socialist Singing Club.

Father Haggerty's new revolutionary grip is the latest thing out. It differs from the old feudal grip and the capitalistic handshake. The former was used by the old barons in order to give his chance acquaintance no opportunity to use his sword arm; the latter is to keep the other fellow's hand out of your pocket. The new grip is of a hearty good fellowship.

None of the delegates, as far as learned, have yet bought the Masonic Temple.

"The pencil dynamiter"—that's the appellation Father Haggerty

applies to Comrad Ryan Walker. The female delegates add charm to the occasion, to say the least.

May 2.—Comrade Hilquit of New York elected chairman, and Comrade Woodby of California vice chairman. An incident illustrating our world wide organization is shown by the following action.

Delegate Carey: If the convention will permit me I desire to say that our Comrade Katayama, of Japan, is here in the hall, and I move that he be given a seat on the platform.

Motion seconded and carried, and Comrade Katayama was greeted with enthusiasm as he took a place on the platform.

After one has shook hands and talked with Gene Debs a few minutes it is not hard to understand why he is so popular and why even his enemies love him.

An argument arose at a dinner affair as to who was the youngest delegate on the convention floor. It was settled in this manner: Nicholas Klein, of Minnesota, proved to be 23 years of age; E. B. Ault, 21 years of age, but A. N. Gilbertson won the prize, proving to be but 20 years of age.

Judge C. C. McHugh, of Anaconda, Mont., is the tallest man in the convention. The Anaconda Standard, in its issue of April 27, has this to say of Comrade McHugh: "If delegate McHugh get the nomination for vice-president he will probably get married." This should be a strong inducement to the woman delegates to favor the nomination of Comrade McHugh for vice president.

As chairman, the author of "History of Socialism" is positively charming in his display of good nature.

Comrade Mrs. Woodward, Chicago, put sugar in her bullion at the banquet. With a toss of the head she says, "Oh, well, I didn't know the Socialist Party had reached the bullion stage. I thought it was tea."

May 3.—Delegate Richardson of California chairman, Comrade Stockell of Tennessee vice chairman in absence of Richardson took the chair.

Consideration of the report of the National secretary occupied most of the session. The remainder of the time was taken up with report of committee on credentials. The cablegram from our German Comrades was the event of the day.

The following cablegram, first read in German, was then translated and read in English to the convention:

"National Convention, Socialist Party, Chicago, Brand's Hall.

"All hail to the comrades assembled for the important work of electing presidential candidates. Three cheers for the International Socialist Movement.

"The executive committee of the Social Democratic Party of Germany."

The reading of the cablegram was greeted with great enthusiasm.

On motion of Delegate Mailly, the executive committee was instructed to send a return cablegram to the German comrades.

Ah, but they'er a smooth, suave lot that New York delegation! Lee with his studious face, Spargo with his old country air, Herron's dulcet voice, Hanford with a manner all his own, breezy yet easy, Sieverman and his persuasive eloquence, Atkinson's graceful way of yielding, Stodolbin's tactful fashion of bringing the convention to business, and, as if all these were not enough to give tone to our metropolitan delegation, there's Wilshire.